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## STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

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More than a century past, our fathers, single minded to the best interests of education, essayed to enunciate what to us still seems to be a fundamental principle, that "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." At all times and in all places education of one sort or another has been held to be a necessity, looking toward the best and fullest development of the individuals in a tribe, community, or nation. The question has never been: "Shall we educate?" The query, rather, has been put: "What shall we study, and how?"

But a hundred years in the study of educational thought and achievement is but as yesterday. In early Egypt, in Arabia, in Babylon, the dwellers in Assyria, and Phoenicia, the Persian and the Roman, the Greek and the Hindu, the Jew and the Japanese; each country and each people has endeavored in its own way, to work out its individual problems, and consciously or unconsciously to follow Paul's admonition: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Education has long been defined, but as we today glance back over the centuries we find it difficult to true the definition of any particular people to the practices of their educational doctrine; much less are we able to square the practice of yesterday with the theory of tomorrow. And whatever may be said of the needs and necessities of those who have so worthily preceded us, or of the broad strides education has taken, there can be no doubt that today, as never before, we are looking for the prophet to lead us, and more than ever before do we realize that the mighty dynamic changes in our industrial and social atmosphere demand a deeper and more significant interpretation be placed upon our

definition of education, and that the practices thereof be laid in accordance with such interpretation.

Here and there the worth of a system is exemplified in the life and achievement of a great soul. More than four centuries before Christ and upon the plains a short call from Rome, a product of the education of the day left his plow in the furrow and with the sword of the soldier and the robe of the dictator, between sunset and sunset, saved the Roman army from defeat. Then leaving power and glory and the acclaim of the multitude, Cincinnatus returned to the occupation of his fathers. Lincoln at Gettysburg, Washington at Valley Forge, where—

Dumb for himself, unless it was to God,  
But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,

Mary A. Livermore and Julia Ward Howe, Florence Nightingale in the Crimea, and Horace Mann in Massachusetts; as teachers of men the work of these and countless others is clearly traced upon the pages of history and reflected in the lives of our fellows.

Often enough do we listen to the words of the philosopher on the meaning of the school, to the ideal utterances of the theorist, to the academic statements of the narrow-minded and conservative, and often enough do we condemn the results achieved in the past as spiritless and formal. What call, however, have we to criticise the work of an Aristotle, or a Herbart, a Luther or an Erasmus? For has it not been written as much for the educationalist as for the money changers, "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" And the answer: Not the rich, necessarily, or the powerful or the gifted, but "he that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

How difficult then to analyze the word or work of another. For Plato education must make only for spiritual growth, and with him spiritual development had nothing in common with the material world. To think of the present was not to be tolerated, for he tells us in the *Republic* that, "practical arts are degrading." Hence all training must be of that ideal character that shall consider only a future state. The philosophy of Plato here seems to be narrowing in that too little is made of our everyday existence.

But as Putnam points out, it was after all Plato whose writings seem to have forecast the modern kindergarten and the doctrine of "learning to do by doing."

Aristotle, on the other hand, seems to be the warm humanist who plans to meet the requirements of everyday life, and who insists that perfect citizenship is the goal toward which education should tend. We gather from Aristotle's *Politics* that if a man prove virtuous in character, no further concern need be felt for his future. Nevertheless the practical, so-called, does not cover the whole of the Aristotelian philosophy. Note what he says: "To be always in quest of what is useful is not becoming to high-minded men and freemen." And in a study of other great minds, Socrates and Seneca, Agricola and Sturm, Ascham, Rabelais, Bacon, Comenius, Francke, Rousseau, Froebel, Spencer and Locke, all have agreed, and disagreed, and as yet no one has entirely erected the superstructure of the education needed today.

It is held by some that education is the reconstruction of experience. They say that neither preparation for life, nor information is the goal, and believe with Aristotle that to work toward an ultimate moral character simply is to stop short of the desired end. It is always necessary, I believe, in such undertaking as the one in which we are now engaged, to pause and to follow the lead of Daniel Webster by returning to the original point of departure, that we may be sure of having an established premise.

The question then is: For what does the school stand? What is education? Education, say some, is training for life, to which answer is made that it is more than a training for life; it is life itself. To meet such a requirement education should bring into action all the abilities of the pupil, or, as O'Shea puts it, the ideal attributes that exist *in potentia* in the human spirit, it should develop in him all essential qualities and virtues; it is to make him master of himself mentally, physically, and morally; it is to help him appreciate and value only the good and discard the relatively bad; it is to prepare him for more complete living; is, in short, the means by which he shall be enabled to take his

place in the great world of life and action as a unit in a complete social order. And if it be true, as has been affirmed, that "to teach men how they may grow independently and for themselves is perhaps the greatest service that one man can do for another," then education should look toward teaching men how to best perform this service.

It seems to be plain that any education worthy the name, considers the present as well as the future of the individual, or, to put it in another way, considers the present, and hence the future, of the individual. Characters must be formed, not alone that ultimate good may be accomplished, but that the standards of society may be raised here and now. This brings us at once to the dual nature of our problem—the individual upon the one hand and society upon the other—and hence, the psychological and sociological elements are both to be considered. The relation of the individual to society gives us the sociological view, while the psychological aspects are determined by the relation of the individual to himself.

Society is made up of a group of individuals. The individual lives in society, is a part of society, is responsible to society, and helps to determine and mold the tone or character of the social atmosphere. Society, however, sets the standards, and the individual must conform, in great measure, to these standards as set. On the other hand, while being responsible, and owing duties, to society, the individual must demand something of himself as well. But while these two sets of duties, of individual to society and of individual to self, are distinct and may be segregated, the one from the other, there is no sharp line of demarcation between the two. That is, the one cannot be considered practically without the other, for what is best for the individual is best for society, and conversely what is for the best interests of society, will prove of greatest value to the individual.

Professor MacVannel points out that just as the individual is a unity whose life is in the process of making, of organization, so is he also a unity in, or an intrinsic part of, the larger unity of society which is in the process of organization as well. If society is to perpetuate and strengthen itself, and if the individ-

ual is to exist and prosper, the latter must, many times, merge his desires in the will of society, and to a greater or less degree forsake personal or selfish ends for the common well-being.

In the material world this dualism of psychological and sociological elements is noted. Society demands an article, brick it may be, or a dynamo, or a bucket. Society needs the article and thereby sets the standards. The *what* is the social phase of our problem. How to produce the article, to carry it over in the various processes of manufacture from the raw material to the completed state, to transport from place to place, the cheapest and most effective methods of advertising—these have to do with the psychological phase.

That the raw materials of the average present-day curriculum are not designed to touch deeply the sociological element in experience can readily be shown. The evolutionary process, the unfoldment of the child's powers, presupposes a widening of the child's experience—a growth from within, through the presentation of certain study materials. But the boy or girl, the product of the school, has little opportunity to react upon society. Or perhaps one might better say, the individual has not gained that which will enable him to react with profit upon society. Knowledge is *not* power, unless knowledge can be transformed into terms of power-reducing energy. The mere knowing a thing is not always significant in itself. The thing known must have some relation to the conditions, the needs, the desires, the life, of the society of which the individual is only one of the component parts. The facts of knowledge must be capable of application looking toward the satisfying of needs and the raising of standards, and the training of the individual must be such as to make possible the interpretation of such application.

But the question is here raised: How does it happen that the raw materials of which we have been speaking, the school studies, have not been such as to meet the sociological and psychological demands? Have the schoolmen of the past been blind to the interests of society? Has too little thought been used in considering the best development of the individual? Have we not held the lesson of mutual helpfulness to be a necessity? Are we

prompted by unworthy ideals or basing our work upon principles that are of our own making?

According as we hold one or another view of the underlying principles of education and of the real province of the school do we translate the school studies into terms of value, and attribute to them relative worths. To some the school stands for culture, and the curriculum should be so ordered as to promote this culture side of the child's life. Some think rather in terms of discipline, and insist that school studies should make for this end. Others again would place information as the chief element to be considered. Shall the value of school studies, however, be found to exist within the studies themselves, or be determined by the nature of such studies? If society sets the standard, how can there be several possible values? With several standards set up, there is, as Dr. Dewey says, "no conception of any single unifying principle . . . the extent and way in which a study brings the pupil to consciousness of his social environment, and confers upon him the ability to interpret his own powers from the standpoint of their possibilities in social use, is the ultimate and unified standard."

It is, of course, unsafe to say that mathematics and the languages make for discipline chiefly, that the study of English brings culture, that history lends itself to the informational side of development. The fact is that, under the best conditions, mathematics is cultural and informational as well as disciplinary in value; the English group of studies may be made to cover as wide a field as mathematics and Latin, while history may bring as complete a development as any school subject. To say that one study makes for culture and another for discipline simply means that the standard for culture or for discipline comes from the individual, not from society. Culture, in the terms of our discussion, means possibilities for development, open-mindedness, honesty, the sense of service awakened, not merely varnish and veneer. Information implies knowledge to be sure, but knowledge that not only can be used, but that is carried over and made a part of the lives of others to the end that all are advantaged thereby. Discipline suggests, not only the analytic mind and the

trained muscle, but the sympathetic soul and teachable spirit as well.

Method, too, is a determining element in the value of studies, for the compositive worth of any given subject-matter to the individual or to society is determined, in no small degree, by the manner of presentation. While it is true that subject-matter and method are not distinct, but exist as the two sides of experience, the psychological and the social, it remains to be said, however, that, for the practical purposes of the teacher and the school, it is eminently necessary that they be clearly distinguished, the one from the other. It has long been insisted by some, and assumed by others, that in a course of training, for example, the method was of chief concern; that if the teacher in embryo could secure a knowledge of method, and understanding of how to do the given thing, that a knowledge of subject-matter itself, of the definite facts connected with the particular line of work, could be somehow grasped at a later time. The fallacy of this view is apparent to all who consent for a moment seriously to consider the issues involved. How utterly inconsistent to endeavor to formulate a method, or to act intelligently under one, until a knowledge is had of that upon which method is based. Many of our normal schools have this lesson yet to learn and educational schools the country over, both elementary and secondary in character, would do well to select the subject-matter of the curriculum with more care than has been manifest in the past. Indeed, the necessity for a knowledge of subject-matter before training or method work is attempted is one of the strongest possible arguments in favor of normal and professional schools admitting as students only those who have had a thorough, previous academic training.

Once subject-matter has been selected in any school, the work should be made more intensive than we now find it—more intensive from the standpoint of thought-values, and also from the side of execution.

All this does not in any manner whatsoever contradict what has been said previously regarding thought and expression being paramount. It simply means that a knowledge at first hand of



things that have a valid place in society, not only for the future but in the present, is to be the first essential. It means, as Doctor Dewey tells us, that "The present has its claims. It is in education, if anywhere, that the claims of the present should be controlling;" and this in accord with the words of President Butler: "Education is the adjustment of the individual to the spiritual possessions of the race." It means what Browning means when he says:

Let things be—not seem,  
I counsel rather, do and nowise dream!  
Earth's young significance is all to learn;  
The dead Greek lore lies buried in the Urn,  
Where he who seeks fire finds ashes.

And self-control, leadership, responsibility. It is the duty of the school to undertake the task of inculcating in its pupils these elements so essential to success? Must the time be placed and the thought of education be centered upon these factors, when it might be troubling itself with the real facts of knowledge? The question is put only to have one answer returned. What of the city where the members of the police number as great as the teachers engaged in the schools, of the houses of correction, of the institutions of reform, the prisons, the courts of justice, and to a lesser extent the hospitals, asylums, and homes for the unfortunate and distressed? Lack of self-control, inability properly to interpret the demands of society or to perform the duties, having learned them, unstableness in character, to the end that the right is lost sight of and the stronger powers of leadership in others prevail. Could the school teach effectively the lesson of self-control, she need have little fear of results when the product of her system is thrown among the currents of the world. And here the tact and ability of the teacher shows itself. It is the teacher who, at his best, stands between the child and the various experiences which await him. The teacher, from his larger store of knowledge, directs the child toward, and introduces him to, these forms of experience which are especially adapted to bring out and develop the element of control, pointing the way that the pupil may, in the *shortest possible time* and

with the *least expenditure of misdirected energy*, adjust himself to his environment.

Rigid traditionalism, extreme rulings, and deeply-furrowed acceptances of the past do not lend themselves to initiative, to open-mindedness, to leadership, to self-control. What would have been the achievements of a Michael Angelo or a Raphael, a Wagner or a Beethoven, a Goethe or an Emerson, a Franklin or a Newton, a Gladstone or a Garrison, had these minds not felt free to reach forth in any direction, free to accept all the inspiration that came to them from the past, free to ignore all the narrowing influences so apparent in the life and work of most of us, free to express themselves naturally and clearly and without restraint?

Alfred Russell Wallace, in his lectures and essays on *Natural Theology and Ethics*, gives us as clear a statement of the ideal of an education that will educate as could well be formulated. He says:

Mental health and wealth do not depend upon a mere accumulation of single facts, but on solid ideas of what life is and ought to be, and what the world around us really means; it does not lie in confinement to a fragmentary life, limited in its range of view, and moving forever in the same monotonous routine, but in a large and free scope of experience; nor does it lie in the degree of variety and intensity to which we can bring our sensations and aspirations, but in acquiring the proper estimate of values, in calming the turmoil of temper and gaining at once sweetness and light, that gentle reasonableness which, though not less free to receive impressions than in the beginning of life, is at the same time matured by experience to a wiser judgment of their comparative worth. The true ideal of a fully developed personality does not consist merely in a keen intellectual acumen, nor in an intense but inactive susceptibility to the moods of happy feeling, nor in a perpetual unresting activity; it involves a balance of all these elements,

and this experience, these forces that play backward and forward, in school and out, touching the pupil in his every occupation; shall we not consider those that have the direct bearing upon his present and that can be appreciated by him, rather than attempt to introduce him to vague and indefinite elements? As I stood, some weeks since, beside the rude dwellings of a simple people in a western desert and watched the natives as they worked at rug weaving or in fashioning the basket, I recalled the question

put to one of these people by an eastern woman: "Isn't it too bad," said she, "that you live so far away?" And the native woman returned a wondering glance as she replied, "I don't live far away, I live right here." While the work of the school must be such as to fit those who form the school community to adjust themselves to the society in which they individually may find themselves, it must not forget that the child can interpret only in the light of present experiences.